LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 96
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

Dialogues of Plato

Edited, with an Introduction, by

Lloyd E. Smith

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On Friendship, Temperance, Courage, and Piety

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PLATO

DIALOGUES OF PLATO

FOREWORD

The four Dialogues offered herein are known by the names of the chief characters in each: *Lysis*, *Charmides*, *Laches*, and *Euthyphro*. They fall into a more or less natural group due to the fact that they all deal with single ethical abstracts — friendship, temperance, courage, and piety, respectively—and in such an exclusive manner that they may, without violation of their significance, be named for the subjects which they treat. The quartet, in addition, has in common the fact that in every case the discussion results in a confession of ignorance as to the nature of the virtue under examination. But in the course of the discussion numerous stimulating hypotheses are brought forward, and though they are discarded in these Dialogues as insufficient, some of them reappear in other Dialogues for further elaboration.

"The lights which Plato throws upon his subject are indirect; but they are not the less real for that. He has no intention of proving a thesis by a cut-and-dried argument; nor does he imagine that a great philosophical problem can be tied up within the limits of a definition. If he has analyzed a proposition or notion, even with the severity of an impossible logic, if half-truths have been compared by him with other half-truths, if he has cleared up or advanced popular ideas or illustrated a new method, the aim of Platonic dialogue has been attained." (Benjamin Jowett.)

In reading Plato, allowance must be made for the time (fourth century Before Christ) in which the discussions are supposed to be taking place. Topics and ideas that occur at once to a modern reader are not even considered in connection with the subject. Other ideas seem to us of the twentieth century little short of absurd. But Plato was a pioneer, and he has set down the somewhat casual meanderings of his thoughts without any attempt at a vivid and concise presentation, for the speed virus of today had not poisoned the blood of the unhurried Athenians. In these Dialogues progress, however futile for the time being, is made toward definition of the commonest terms glibly mouthed by every user of language. It is a noble beginning, though it does become tedious at times, and impatience at labyrinthian commonplaces is no true sign of lack of appreciation. The world must move—preferably onward, but the direction is a matter of some debate—and, moving, it must acknowledge the bases from which it got its start.

In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson (*Representative Men*, Volume 1, Little Blue Book No. 423): "Among secular books, Plato only is entitled to Omar's fanatical compliment to the Koran, when he said, 'Burn the libraries; for their value is in this book.' These sentences contain the culture of nations; these are the corner-stone of schools; these are the fountain-head of literatures. A discipline it is in logic, arithmetic, taste, symmetry, poetry, language, rhetoric, ontology, morals, or practical wisdom. There was never such range of speculation. Out

of Plato come all things that are still written and debated among men of thought. Great havoc makes he among our originalities. We have reached the mountain from which all these drift boulders were detached. The Bible of the learned for twenty-two hundred years, every brisk young man who says in succession fine things to each reluctant generation,—Boethius, Rabelais, Erasmus, Bruno, Locke, Rousseau, Alfieri, Coleridge, — is some reader of Plato, translating into the vernacular, wittily, his good things. Even the men of grander proportion suffer some deduction from the misfortune (shall I say?) of coming after this exhausting generalizer. St. Augustine, Copernicus, Newton, Behman, Swedenborg, Goethe, are likewise his debtors and must say after him. For it is fair to credit the broadest generalizer with all the particulars deducible from his thesis.

"Plato is philosophy, and philosophy, Plato, —at once the glory and the shame of mankind, since neither Saxon nor Roman have availed to add any idea to his categories. No wife, no children had he, and the thinkers of all civilized nations are his posterity and are tinged with his mind...." And so on, but Emerson's essay cannot be quoted here in full!

The Dialogues represent more or less imaginary conversations between Socrates and various younger men of Athens—chiefly the young men, because they are the least likely to be offended by Socrates' persistent search after truth, regardless of tradition, and often with the result of exposing the ignorance of his verb-

al opponent. Socrates never wrote a word, so all that we know of him comes to us, principally, from Plato. At the same time, it must be kept in mind that the Platonic discourses present a good many ideas that are distinctly Platonic and not Socratic. Socrates is often used as a mouthpiece for Plato himself.

For further information concerning Plato and his philosophy, Will Durant's *Guide to Plato* (Little Blue Book No. 159) is recommended. The Dialogues known as the *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo* are included in the *Trial and Death of Socrates* (Little Blue Book No. 94), together with brief selections from the *Banquet*. The *Republic* of Plato, carefully condensed by H. M. Tichenor, is in Little Blue Book No. 157.

The four Dialogues herein presented have been somewhat summarized and condensed, so that this version is not identical with the original Greek or with any one translation. An effort has been made to preserve both the form and style of Plato, besides, of course, the sense and spirit of his argument. The condensation has been effected largely by omitting irrelevant portions of the Dialogues, often introductory and without any bearing on the subject in hand, and by "tightening up" certain portions of the discussion — that is, a long series of casual queries and affirmative answers has been shortened to a summary and a few terse questions. The result, if less emphatic, is perhaps also less tedious; and, by this means, it has been possible to offer a great deal more material within the confines of this book than would otherwise have been feasible.

DIALOGUES OF PLATO

LYSIS (FRIENDSHIP)

Characters: *Hippothales, Ctesippus, Menexenus, Lysis, and Socrates.*

(The *Lysis* is perhaps the best of the present group, possessing a certain natural grace by virtue of its beautiful subject, friendship. There is a trace of the humorous irony that is very apparent in the *Laches*: Socrates, Menexenus, and Lysis are all very good friends, and yet they cannot tell what true friendship really is!

(Love and being in love are treated in this Diologue much as moderns speak and think of love between opposite sexes, but it is only the love between man and man that is here discussed. The ancients thought of such love as more virulent than people regard it today. It is necessary to understand this attitude of the characters, lest more reserved modern readers brand these men of Greece as effeminate, sentimental weaklings. The converse is true: this healthy frankness is an indication of vigorous and beautiful ideals. Sarah Bernhardt once said: "The highest form of friendship does not exist between man and woman, but between man and man. David said to Jonathan: 'Thy love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women.' The love of Jonathan for David is the highest love, the love that can neither die nor lessen, the love that is not prostituted as it

were by reference to sexuality. A love as wholesome and abiding as this, perhaps, never once existed between a man and his wife."

(The scene of the *Lysis* is laid in a newly built palestra, or school where boys were trained in athletics (gymnasium), just outside of the city walls of Athens. Socrates, on the way from the Academy to the Lyceum, is stopped by Hippothales and drawn into conversation. Various young men gather round him. He learns that Hippothales is "in love" with one young Lysis, a youth stalwart and handsome as a young god. Hippothales has erred in praising his favorite with highly laudatory phrases, and Socrates takes him to task for his lack of modesty in thus covertly praising himself for his happy choice of a friend, and for risking that friend's good character by so praising him and perhaps creating in him arrogance and pride. Not only this, but Hippothales has not yet won the friendship of Lysis, and to praise him thus is a display of presumption. Therefore Socrates agrees to instruct Hippothales in the proper manner of addressing a man one has chosen to become one's friend. Seeking Lysis, Socrates and Ctesippus go into the palestra, where Hippothales told them they would find the youth in company with Menexenus, his intimate friend.

(Socrates and Ctesippus, in conversation, lure Menexenus to their group. Lysis, emboldened by the presence of his friend, joins them. Hippothales and the others come in from outside, but Hippothales stands aloof where he can see but not be seen by Lysis. Menexenus is called

away on some business, so Socrates sets about questioning Lysis.)

Socrates. No doubt your parents love you dearly?

Lysis. Very dearly.

Soc. So they would wish to have you as happy as possible.

Lys. Certainly.

Soc. Does a slave, who is not free to do as he wishes, appear to you to be happy?

Lys. I should say not.

Soc. Your parents, though, who love you, do everything they can to make *you* happy?

Lys. Of course.

Soc. So they let you do everything you wish, and never scold you or hinder you?

Lys. No, they scold me often, and won't let me do lots of things.

Soc. How is this? They want you to be happy, but they prevent you from doing things.

(It is brought out that Lysis is not permitted to drive his father's chariots, but a hired charioteer can and does. Lysis cannot even drive a pair of mules, for a slave mule-driver does that. Lysis is also subject to a governor, no better than a slave, for he is paid to tutor Lysis. It is the same with Lysis' mother as with his father, for she won't let him touch her loom or shuttle. But in matters of writing letters or playing on the lyre, Lysis can do as he pleases and how he pleases—to the extreme of playing the lyre with his fingers or with a stick, for instance.)

Soc. Why do you suppose they hinder you in some matters and not in others, Lysis?

Lys. Probably because I understand the one, and not the other.

Soc. Then your father isn't waiting for you to be old enough, but for you to become wise enough to handle his property. When you are wise enough, do you think he will turn these things over to you?

Lys. No doubt he will.

Soc. And the Athenians, too, do you think they would hand matters of state over to you if you were the wisest man in such state matters?

Lys. I expect they would.

Soc. And in all other things likewise? If the king's son had trouble with his eyes, and you knew how it could be cured, would he let you do as you wished, even if you commanded that the eyes be forced open and ashes be thrown in?

Lys. If I understood about curing the eyes, I am sure he would have it done as I directed.

Soc. So you see how the matter stands, Lysis. All things which we know properly, no matter what things they are, all people will let us handle as we wish; but all things which we do not know properly, everyone will prevent us from touching, even our fathers and mothers. Do you think, then, that anyone will love us in matters of which we know nothing and so are of no use?

Lys. I don't think anyone would.

Soc. No, even our parents wouldn't love us in such things. So it behooves us to educate ourselves in all things, so that we may be esteemed for them. You do not consider your-

self wise in matters of which you have no knowledge?

Lys. Hardly.

Soc. As long as you need a teacher, too, you are not wise?

Lys. That is true.

Soc. Then you cannot be wise, if you are still unwise?

Lys. I shouldn't think so, Socrates.

(Socrates is on the point of speaking to Hippothales, to remind him that this is the way he ought to address his favorite, and not in terms of high praise, but it occurs to him that Hippothales desires to remain unseen by Lysis, so he keeps silent. Menexenus now returns, and Socrates enjoins Lysis to tell him all that has been discussed. Whereupon Lysis induces Socrates to enter intc conversation with Menexenus, who is very fond of argument.)

Soc. Lysis wishes me to ask Menexenus a question. Attend, Menexenus. From earliest childhood I have had a desire for one thing, as people have desires for horses, for money, and so on, and what I have desired has always been friends. I'd sooner have one good friend than the best quail or cock in all the world. Indeed, so fond am I of friendship, that I'd sooner have one good friend than all the wealth of the richest man in the world. So, when I see you and Lysis such good friends while still so young, I am at a loss. How have you brought this good fortune to pass? You should know, for your friendship is apparent to all. Tell me about it, then. As soon as one man loves another, which of the two becomes the friend?

Is it the lover of the loved, or the loved of the lover? Or doesn't it make any difference?

Menexenus. As far as I know, there's no difference.

Soc. How can that be? Do both become friends, each to the other, if only one loves the other?

Men. I think so.

Soc. Isn't it possible for the lover to be disappointed in the return of love by the one he loves? Even for the lover to be hated by the object of his love?

Men. Yes, I admit it is possible.

Soc. That is to say, one loves, the other is loved.

Men. Exactly.

Soc. Then which of the two is the friend of the other? Can the hated one be the friend of the loved, or vice versa? Or must each love the other, to be friends?

Men. I agree that each must love the other. We have contradicted ourselves, but this is certainly so.

Soc. Then the lover is not a friend of anyone who does not love him in return. That is, people cannot be friends of horses, or of other animals, or of wine. or of wisdom, unless all these love them in return. And the poet must speak falsely who says, Happy is he who has boys for his friends, and horses, and hunting-dogs, and guests in a foreign land.

Men. I don't think the poet is wrong, Socrates.

Soc. What! You don't mean to say you think he's right?

Men. Yes, I think he is right.

Soc. Therefore, one who loves another is his friend whether or no he is loved or hated in return. Little children, not yet old enough to love in a true sense, but perhaps able to hate their parents for treating them severely, are none the less loved and befriended by their parents. Is this so?

Men. Surely.

Soc. The friend, then, is not the object of the love, but the lover?

Men. Apparently.

Soc. Conversely, it is not the object of hate that is the enemy, but the hater?

Men. Agreed.

Soc. See where this is leading us. Under this reasoning, many are beloved by their enemies, and hated by their friends; are friends to their enemies, but enemies to their friends, if the beloved is a friend,, and not the lover. Doesn't it seem absurd to be an enemy to a friend, and a friend to an enemy?

Men. Indeed it does, Socrates.

Soc. Then the beloved is also the friend of the lover, and the hated the enemy of the hater?

Men. Yes.

Soc. Which brings us to the same result. According to this, a man is often a friend of that which is not friendly, and even of that which is hostile to him, which is as often as he is not loved but even hated by the one whom he loves. Similarly, often he is not an enemy, but even a friend to ar enemy; as often, in

fact, as he is not hated, but even loved by the man he hates.

Men. It appears so.

Soc. What are we to do, then? Neither he who loves, nor he who is loved, nor those who love each other, seem to be friends. Who else can we find able to become friends?

Men. I'm sure I don't know, Socrates.

Soc. Can it be that we have been conducting our investigation poorly?

Men. It seems that we must have.

Soc. Let us begin again, then, and try to avoid going astray. Let us turn for a moment to the poets, who are such good friends to us in matters of wisdom. They speak very highly of friends, of course, and say that it is God who makes men friends, as in the line: "God ever conducts like to like" [Homer's *Odyssey*] and makes them known, one to the other. Others, too, have said that the like must always be friendly to the like. Do they speak well in this?

Lys. Possibly.

(The argument develops: Wicked men, the more they are in company with other wicked men, become, not friends, but greater and greater enemies. For men who injure each other cannot become friends. Possibly, however, bad men are never very like one another, and it is the good men to whom the poets refer. Thus, bad men can never become friends with one another, or with good men, but the good, being like one another, can become friends one with another. This much seems clear.)

Soc. I seem to see some difficulty. The like,

insofar as he is like, is friendly to the like, and such a man is useful to such a man. Or, put it this way: Is there any good or any harm that a like thing can do to a like thing which it cannot do to itself, or is there anything that can be done to it, which it cannot do to itself? And is it possible for such things to be held in regard by each other, when they cannot assist each other?

Lys. It is not possible.

Soc. Can a thing which is held in no regard be a friend?

Lys. Of course not.

Soc. Hence the like is not a friend to the like; but perhaps the good will be a friend to the good, insofar as he is good, and not insofar as he is like?

Lys. Perhaps so.

Soc. But the good man, insofar as he is good, will be found sufficient unto himself, and, if sufficient, he will want nothing so far as his sufficiency goes. Not wanting anything, he will feel no regard for anything, and what he feels no regard for, he cannot love, and if he does not love, he won't be a friend. Is all this true?

Lys. True indeed.

Soc. How can the good ever be friends with the good, then, when neither absent from nor present with one another have they need of one another? Is it possible to make such people care for one another? For they must care for one another in order to be friends.

Lys. I don't see how it is possible to make such people care for one another.

Soc. Observe, Lysis, how we are deceived We are deceived in the whole, are we not?

Lys. Why, how is that?

Soc. I remember hearing once that like is always hostile to like, that the worst enemies of good men are always good men. Witness Hesiod: "Potter ever wars with the potter, bard with the bard, and beggar with beggar."

(The argument proceeds: Thus, by a universal and infallible law, the more any two things resemble each other, the more do they submit to envy, strife, and hatred; and the more any two things differ from each other, the greater the friendship or attraction between them. For the poor are obliged to make themselves friends of the rich, and the weak of the strong, for the sake of their assistance; and the sick man must also become friendly with the physician; in short everyone without knowledge must be friendly with those who have knowledge. Everything craves for its opposite, not for its counterpart; dryness needs moisture, heat needs cold, sharpness craves for dulness, the bitter for sweetness, etc. For the contrary is food to the contrary, whereas the like can derive no advantage from the like.)

Soc. We admit, then, that nothing is so friendly to a thing as its contrary.

Men. We do.

Soc. Then see where we are. Is anything so contrary to friendship as enmity?

Men. Nothing.

Soc. Is friendship a friend to enmity, or enmity to friendship? Or justice to injustice, or conversely? Or temperance to intemperance, and the reverse?

Men. Certainly not.

Soc. Therefore, it cannot be true that opposites are friendly. Neither is the unlike friendly with the unlike, nor, as we have said, is the like friendly with the like. We must try once more. Perhaps it is that which is neither good nor evil which is friendly with the good.

Men. What do you mean?

Soc. I confess I am a little confused by the entanglement of the subject. But I think of friendship as something very beautiful—soft, smooth, slippery—perhaps because it is so is the reason for its slipping through our fingers so easily. Now, to what is beautiful and good, that which is neither good nor evil may be friendly, or so I think. How I arrive at this, I shall try to show you. I recognize three separate classes of things: good, evil, and that which is neither good nor evil. Is this clear?

Men. It is.

Soc. Our previous decisions forbid us to believe that good is friendly with good, or evil with evil, or good with evil. There remains the possibility of that which is neither good nor evil being friendly with itself, or with the good—for surely nothing can be friendly with evil. And since like cannot be friendly with like, as we decided, that which is neither good nor evil can be friendly with itself. Hence,

friendship can exist only between the good and that which is neither good nor evil.

Men. You reason well, Socrates.

Soc. A healthy body, however, has no need of medicine. Therefore, no one in good health is friendly with a physician on account of health. But the sick man *is* friendly with the physician, and on account of his sickness. Sickness is an evil, medicine is both good and useful. So, a sick body is compelled to be friendly with medicine, and it is a thing which is neither good nor evil becoming friendly with good on account of the presence of evil. For the body is not, insofar as it is a body, either good or evil. Or am I mistaken.

Men. No, you are quite right.

Soc. But the body becomes thus friendly before the evil present in it makes it evil also, for, as we said, nothing could be friendly with evil. Now I say that some things are themselves identical with what is present in them, and some things are not. For example, if something is dyed with a tint, the tint is present with the substance which is dyed. But is the dyed substance such, in point of color, as that which is applied to it?

Men. I don't follow you.

Soc. Suppose someone dyes your hair white Would it be white or appear white then?

Men. It would appear white.

Soc. That is to say, whiteness would be present with the hair, but the hair would not be any more white, in its actual essence, than it was at first. Though whiteness is present, the

hair is neither white nor black itself, on that account.

Men. I see that.

Soc. But, my friend, when old age has turned your hair white, then it becomes identical with that which is present with it, white by the presence of whiteness. You grant this? Very well. If a thing be present in a substance, will the substance be such as that which is present with it; or will it be such if the thing is present under certain conditions, and under certain other conditions, not such?

Men. I would say that it depends on the conditions.

Soc. To recapitulate: That which is neither good nor evil, when evil is present with it, is sometimes not itself evil as yet, and sometimes it has already become evil itself, or identical with the evil present in it. When evil is present, and that which is neither good nor evil has not become evil itself, the very presence of evil in it makes it desirous of good; but if this present evil makes it also evil, then the presence of this evil identical with itself deprives it of a friendly feeling for good, for evil can never be friendly with good or with anything, as we said. We may say further, by way of example, that those who are already wise are no longer friends of wisdom; again, those who are so possessed of foolishness as to be evil, cannot be friends of wisdom; but those who have the evil of foolishness in them, but who have not become, as a consequence of it, either foolish or ignorant themselves, and who still under-

stand that they do not know the things they do not know, are neither good nor evil, as yet, so that they can become friends of wisdom (or of philosophers) because of the evil (foolishness) present within them, but with which they are not as yet identical. Now, then, Lysis and Menexenus, we seem to have discovered what it is that is friendly or not friendly. No matter whether it be soul, body, or anything else, it is that which is neither good nor evil that is friendly with the good on account of the presence of evil. Do you both agree?

Men. and Lys. We agree.

Soc. [After a pause.] I seem to see a difficulty even in this. We have only been dreaming of our treasure, for it is not yet within our grasp. We have fallen into false reasoning. For, if a man be a friend, isn't he a friend to someone?

Men. Surely.

Soc. For the sake of nothing, on account of nothing? Or for the sake of something, on account of something?

Men. For the sake of something, and on account of something.

Soc. Is he a friend to that thing which makes him a friend to his friend, or is he to it neither friend nor foe? Or perhaps you can follow me and I can follow myself better if we adopt a more concrete example. Take the same case of the sick man and the physician. The sick man is a friend to the physician, we said, on account of sickness and for the sake of health. Sickness is an evil, health a good. The body,

a thing neither good nor evil, is, on account of the presence of sickness (an evil), a friend to the medical art (a good). It is for the sake of health (a good) that the medical art has received this friendship. Then is the body a friend or not a friend to health (that which makes it a friend to its friend, the medical art)? And is it a foe, or not, to sickness?

Men. A friend to health, certainly, and a foe to sickness.

Soc. The situation is therefore something like this: That which is neither good nor evil (the body) is a friend to good (medicine) on account of an evil (sickness) to which it is a foe, for the sake of a good (health) to which it is a friend. The friendly (the body), then, is a friend for the sake of that (a good) to which it is a friend, on account of that (an evil) to which it is a foe. Or am I wrong?

Men. No; on the contrary, you seem to be right.

Soc. Careful now. Friend has become friend to friend, or like has become friend to like—but we'll let that pass. A man, a friend to medicine for the sake of health, may be a friend to health also, and for the sake of something. For the sake of something to which he is friendly, do you suppose, to follow out our line of argument?

Men. I suppose so, yes.

Soc. Or is he a friend to that thing (health) for the sake of some other thing to which he is also a friend? If this is so, it is an eternal progression. We must arrive at some beginning

which will not refer us to friend upon friend, but will arrive at that to which we are in the first instance friends, and for the sake of which we say we are friends to all the rest. Must we not?

Men. We must.

Soc. We must consider it, indeed, in order that all those other things, to which we said we were friendly, for the sake of that one thing, may not, like so many shadows of it, lead us into error, but that we may establish that thing as the first to which we are really and truly friends. Thus, if a man sets a high value on something, say on his son (which most men would prize above all else), may he not be led by his extreme regard for his son to set a high value on other things also? For, if his son drink hemlock, the father will prize wine, if wine will save his son's life, and he will even prize the cup containing the wine. Yet this doesn't say that he will prize all three—son, wine, cup—equally, but rather that he will set a value, not on those things which are procured for the sake of another thing, but on that for the sake of which all those other things are procured. Just as we value gold and silver, not because they are procured for the sake of something else, but for the sake of that for which they are procured.

Men. This seems reasonable.

Soc. Apply the same reasoning to friendship. When we say we are friendly to things for the sake of a thing to which we are also friendly (as we discussed) are we not using a term with

regard to them which belong to something else? Do we not appear to be in reality friendly only with that in which all these so-called friendships terminate?

Men. It seems so.

Soc. We are, therefore, not friendly with that to which we are truly friendly for the sake of any other thing to which we are friendly. We can dismiss this as proved. To proceed: Are we friends to the good?

Men. I suppose we are.

Soc. Summarizing, then: If of our three classes (good, evil, and that which is neither good nor evil) evil is taken away and only the other two (good and that which is neither good nor evil) are left, it would come to pass that good would no longer be of any use or value to us. With evil removed, there would be nothing to harm us, and we should need no assistance. Thus it appears that it is only on account of evil that we feel any regard and affection for good, as though good were a medicine and evil a disease to be cured by it—for where there is no disease, there is no need for medicine. Apparently, then, the nature of good is such that it is loved on account of evil by us who are intermediate between evil and good, but in itself, and for itself, it is quite useless. Therefore, the original thing to which we are friendly, that wherein all those other things terminate to which we said we were friendly for the sake of another thing, bears to these things no resemblance at all. For to these things we call ourselves friendly for the sake

of another thing to which we were friendly; but that to which we are really friendly appears to be of a nature exactly the reverse of this, since we found that we were friendly to it for the sake of a thing to which we were unfriendly, and, if this latter be removed, we are, it seems, friendly to it no longer.

Men. Apparently not, according to our present position.

Soc. But if evil is banished, will hunger or thirst, as evils, continue to exist? Or will they exist and not hurt? Still, since it is ridiculous to speculate on what will exist when we cannot know, let us consider that a man can be both harmed and benefited by hunger, can he not?

Men. He can.

Soc. Or he can endure it without either harm or benefit, and the same with thirst. So, if evil is banished, there is no reason for things which are not evil to be banished with it. Desires, therefore, which are neither evil nor good will continue to exist, after evil is extinct. And a man who is enamored of another cannot help loving that other, so it appears that, even if evil be extinct, there will remain certain things to which we can be friendly. Is this true?

Men. I think so.

Soc. But if evil were the cause of our friendliness, and it became extinct, it would no longer be possible to be friendly with anything. Yet we had agreed that one was friendly to something else on account of evil. And now it appears that desire is the cause of friendship, that whatever desires is friendly to that which

it desires, and friendly at the time of its feeling the desire. But does that which feels desire, desire that of which it is in need?

Men. I should think it would.

Soc. That which is in need is friendly to that of which it is in need, and becomes in want of that which is taken from it?

Men. Certainly.

Soc. Then that which belongs to a man is seen to be the object of his desire, and therefore the object, also, of his love and friendship. So, you two who are so friendly to each other, can be said to belong to each other. Ah, I see that pleases you. We can say, then, that a man belongs in some way to the object of his love, and that a true and genuine lover is loved in return by that object.

Men. and Lys. Good, Socrates, good.

Soc. But, how now? That which belongs to us—is it like us or unlike us? Does good belong to everyone, and is evil a stranger to all, or does good belong to good, evil to evil, and so on?

Men. and Lys. The latter, of course.

Soc. Then we find ourselves at a position we formerly rejected. But there seems to be no other way of treating the subject. Still, reckon up all that we have said. There is certainly no harm in considering it all carefully. And, Lysis and Menexenus, how strange it is that we, you and I, my friends—for I include myself with you—can be such good friends and yet not know what we mean by our friendship.

CHARMIDES (TEMPERANCE)

Characters: Chaerepho, Critias, Charmides, and Socrates.

(Temperance is one of the four cardinal virtues—temperance, wisdom, fortitude, justice—of Plato. However, to understand this Dialogue in the sense of the word as used by Plato. the word must be thought of in a much broader sense than it is commonly used today. The establishment of so-called "temperance societies" (which originally advocated *moderation* in the use of intoxicating liquors) has made *temperance* synonymous with total abstinence from intoxicating beverages of all sorts. Properly, the word signifies self-restraint or self-control, that is to say, moderation, in the use of practice of anything—in the drinking of coffee as much as in the drinking of wine; in sleeping as well as in keeping unearthly hours; in eating wholesome food as much as in eating harmful condiments. It implies moderation, too, in the exercise of the bodily functions, in the expression of the emotions, in the indulgence of the passions. Thus, temperance applies to good things as well as bad. Indeed, the ancients linked *modesty* with *temperance* —moderation in self-assertion—and in this Dialogue it is sometimes thought of in this sense.

(Charmides is a young man who is accorded a handsome portion of temperance, or modesty, by his friends when they describe his character. Yet, when asked by Socrates to define

what it is he is so fortunate to possess so abundantly, he fails absurdly. Socrates, as usual, evades pinning the matter down to an actual definition, but contents himself with showing that temperance is not a thing such as others thought it was. The idea that the essential element of virtue is knowledge, which Socrates was always expounding, is met with in this Dialogue. Notice, too, that Critias, one of the characters, later becomes the enemy of Socrates and figures in his later life to an extent of influencing people against the old philosopher when he is brought to trial—see Little Blue Book No. 94.

(Socrates is just returning from the battle of Potidea, for he served as a hoplite in the Greek army, and meets with some of his friends in the palestra of Taures. Here he makes the acquaintance of Charmides, a handsome youth whom he has never seen before. Charmides is having some trouble with a dull ache in his head, and, persuaded that Socrates is a physician who can cure it, he is induced to talk with the philosopher. Since Charmides is praised for having lots of temperance in his make-up, Socrates, pursuant to the cure of which he knows, persuades the lad to tell of this temperance.)

Socrates. Tell me, Charmides, what is temperance according to your opinion?

Charmides. It appears, Socrates, to consist in doing everything quietly and orderly—in short, a certain quietness seems to be the basis of it.

Soc. People do say the quiet are temperate. But, consider. Temperance is accorded a beautiful thing. Now which is the more beautiful, to run rapidly and gracefully or slowly and clumsily?

Char. Rapidly and gracefully, of course.

Soc. Or to write swiftly or slowly? Or to play the harp speedily or hesitantly? To be agile in boxing and wrestling, or heavy and ponderous? Is it not always the most rapid and most brisk movements of the body and mind, rather than the slow and quiet, that are the most beautiful?

Char. Entirely so.

Soc. But we said that temperance was something beautiful. So not quietness, but celerity and dexterity are the bases of temperance. Even in the investigations of the soul, it is he who arrives at conclusions most accurately and most swiftly, rather than he who reaches them slowly and deliberately, that is the most temperate. According to this, a temperate life will not be a quiet life, since it surely ought to be beautiful.

Char. That sounds very reasonable.

Soc. Consider, Charmides, what sort of a man temperance causes one to be, when it is present with one.

Char. It seems to me that temperance makes a man ashamed and bashful, so temperance, therefore, appears to be what shame is.

Soc. Very well. But remember we said temperance was something beautiful. So temperate men must be good men, and that which

renders men good is also good itself, so that temperance is not only beautiful, but good. And Homer says: "Shame ill accompanies a man in need." Shame appears, then, to be neither good nor not good, but to be both at various times. Yet temperance is good, as we have said, and therefore will not be shame, which is no more good than bad.

Char. Good enough, Socrates. But I have been told that temperance consists in managing one's affairs.

Soc. This is absurd. Suppose all of us did nothing save our own things. Suppose we all made everything we use, by a city law, and could make nothing for anyone else. This would be managing our own affairs, yet such a city would hardly be well governed, and a well governed city is a temperately ordered city, so that temperance cannot consist in managing one's own affairs. Indeed, it is hard to know just what managing one's own affairs would consist in.

Char. It seems so, certainly. But let Critias answer the problem, since it was he who told me that temperance was such.

Critias. I can answer it, I guess. Because you don't know the answer, Charmides, is no sign that I don't.

Soc. Do you admit, Critias, since I must now question you, do you admit that all artists do something, and that they do not only their own business but that of others likewise?

Crit. Yes, I admit that.

Soc. Does this prevent them from being temperate?

Crit. I don't see why it should.

Soc. How is it, then, that those who transact only their own affairs can be temperate, if nothing prevents those who transact the affairs of others from being temperate also?

Crit. I have not admitted that "to transact" and "to make" something are one and the same.

Soc. Surely "to make" something and "to do" something are the same.

Crit. I do not think so; nor is "to work" the same as "to make," for Hesiod says: "No work is a disgrace." He uses "work" in the sense of creating something beautiful and useful, and not in the sense of making anything you please.

Soc. We must, above all things, understand our terms and to what they refer. Tell me, now, do you say that temperance is the "doing" or the "making"—or however you choose to express it—of good things?

Crit. Exactly that.

Soc. He who acts well is temperate, then, and not he who acts badly. I wonder, though, if you think people who conduct themselves temperately are ignorant that they are temperate.

Crit. On the contrary, I think they are fully aware of their temperance.

Soc. How about a physician who prescribes a treatment which he is not sure will improve his patient, but which, nevertheless, does im-

prove him? He does what is fitting and good, and is therefore temperate, yet, when he was doing it, he was not aware of it.

Crit. Rather than admit that the man who is ignorant of himself is temperate, I am willing to retract some of my assertions, which may have been careless. I almost, indeed, assert that to know oneself is temperance, for I agree absolutely with him who placed the precept upon the temple at Delphi. Thus the god addresses those coming to the temple, and he says nothing less than "Be temperate," but expresses it more enigmatically, as becomes a prophet. For "Know thyself" and "Be temperate" are identical commands.

Soc. I am only seeking for information, being myself ignorant. If to know a thing is temperance, that makes temperance a *science*, and, necessarily, it must be a science of something. Medicine is the science of health, and produces a healthy body. Building is the science of construction, and produces dwellings. Tailoring is the science of sewing, and produces clothes. What, in the same way, is temperance the science of that is different from itself (as health is different from medicine, sewing is different from the art of tailoring, and so on), and what does it produce?

Crit. You err, Socrates. Temperance is not naturally similar to the other sciences, nor are all other sciences similar one to another. Mathematics is a science, yet it produces nothing like dwellings or clothes.

Soc. But with all sciences it is possible to

show that of which it is the science, as mathematics is the science of the odd and even, how they are situated as regards multitude, with respect to themselves and to each other; and the even and odd are something different from the science of mathematics itself. But what is temperance the science of, that is different from itself?

Crit. Temperance is different, as I said, from other sciences. It is the science of itself, and of all the other sciences also.

Soc. Then the temperate man will know himself, be able to examine what he knows or does not know, and to look into all other things besides. And no other person will be able to do these things. We must consider, though, whether it is possible or not to know, with respect to what a person knows and does not know, that he does know and does not know; and, in the next place, if this is ever so completely possible, what the utility of it will be to us who know it.

Crit. I grant it is necessary to consider this.

Soc. If there is, as you have asserted, one science which is the science of itself and of the rest of the sciences, and of ignorance besides, we must see how absurdly we are arguing. Try the same thing in other matters. Does a seeing power exist, which is not the seeing power of those things which are the objects of the rest of the seeing powers, but is the seeing power of itself and the rest of the seeing powers, and similarly of not seeing powers; and though it is a seeing power it does not see

any color, but sees itself and the rest of the seeing powers?

Crit. This doesn't seem possible to me.

Soc. Similarly, is there any sense which perceives other senses and itself, but perceives none of those things which the other senses perceive? Is there any desire which is the desire of no pleasure, but is the desire of itself and of the rest of desires? Is there any will which wills no good, but wills only itself and the rest of wills? Is there any love which is the love of nothing beautiful, but loves itself only and the rest of loves? Is there any fear which fears itself and all other fears, but fears nothing fearful? Is there any fancy, which fancies fancies and itself, but which forms no idea concerning the objects of other fancies?

Crit. Indeed, I believe not.

Soc. But we say, it seems, that there is a science of such a kind as to be the science of no learning, but the science of itself and the rest of sciences. Would it not be strange if there were such a science? Still, let us not assert there isn't any, but consider if there may be any.

Since this is the science of something (for a science is the science of something, just as a greater thing is greater than something, and greater, too, than something that is of necessity less than itself), we can regard it thus: Suppose it were a greater, and we found something greater which is greater than the greater and than itself, and yet which is less than any of these things than which the rest of things

are greater. Then we should have something both greater and less than itself. Similarly, with other attributes or properties. For whatever has a power of its own with respect to itself, possesses likewise that existence to which that power is related.

To make it clearer, consider hearing. Hearing is the hearing of a sound. If it could hear itself, then, it would hear itself as having a sound or a voice, for otherwise it could not hear itself. Similarly, with sight, which could not see itself unless it had color. Thus it seems that it is quite impossible for a thing to have a power of its own with respect to itself, that is, for a science to be a science of itself and all other sciences.

Yet there may be some such thing. It is not for me to determine. But if there is, we shall have to determine first if it is useful, before we can know that it is temperance. But, Critias, do you tell us and show us, if you can, that such a science, of a science which is also useful, is possible. Or, we'll concede that it is possible. Then how does one know what a person knows and what he does not know? For we agree that to know oneself is to be temperate.

Crit. You argue well, Socrates. It is like this: If anyone possesses the science which knows itself, he will also know himself, just as whoever possesses swiftness is swift, whoever has knowledge is knowing, and so on.

Soc. I do not doubt that when anyone possesses that which knows itself, he will surely then become wise himself. But how does he know *what* he knows and *what* he doesn't

know? Take medicine: to know whether he knows anything of medical science, he must have some knowledge of medical science, and not necessarily of temperance. Similarly, with other things. So this science of itself, if it exists, can tell only of other sciences as sciences, and not *what* he knows concerning them, but only *that* he knows or *that* he does not know.

Crit. I confess it looks that way.

Soc. To know what he knows and what he does not know, therefore, will not be to be temperate, nor will it be to be intemperate, but, as it seems, only that he knows and that he does not know. Nor will this person be able to examine another to find out whether he knows or not what he may claim to know; he may know that he possesses a certain science, but of what thing temperance will not help him to know.

Thus, if temperance is merely the science of a science, and of ignorance, it will be able to distinguish neither the physician, who knows his art, nor him who thinks he is a physician; nor any other person who knows anything whatever, except a fellow-artist, as is the case with other operatives. What utility, then, shall we derive from temperance if it is of such a kind? Did it but enable us to know what we know and do not know, and what others know and do not know it, would, assuredly, be very useful indeed.

Still, let us concede these points, to see if it would be a real benefit, after all. If temperance could tell us what we know and do not know,

and what others know and do not know, the world would be conducted scientifically. For it would be possible to detect false artists, false artisans, and false prophets, at once. Only those who knew their art or craft or divination would be allowed to act for the good of the world. Thus everything would be done in the best possible way by the best possible agents.

Furnished, then, in this way, the human race would, I concede, act and live scientifically. For, temperance being our guard, it would not permit ignorance to interfere and cooperate with us. But, by acting scientifically, that we should be able to do well and be happy—this, friend Critias, I am not yet able to understand.

Crit. Yet you will not easily find any other method of doing well, if you despise the doing of a thing scientifically.

Soc. But how do you mean? You will not admit that the cobbler, or the brass-worker, or any such artisan, is happy by virtue of his craft alone, however scientifically he may live. Or is there a science of something that will enable him to be happy?

Crit. Of good and evil, assuredly.

Soc. So living scientifically is not the causing to do well and to be happy, nor belonging to all other sciences, but to one science alone, relating to good and evil. If this were taken away, all the other sciences would remain as effective as they now are, but, with this science absent, all the other sciences wouldn't turn out so well and so usefully. Yet this science is not

temperance, for it is not the science of sciences and of ignorance, but the science of good and evil.

Temperance, indeed, be it even the science of sciences, cannot take the place of medicine to heal sores and cure diseases. It can do nothing directly of a utilitarian nature, for all such useful things are done by other arts. So you see, Critias, that my fears were justified when I felt that temperance, as such as we have conceded it to be, would be of no use or value to us.

Now, it seems, we are completely vanquished on every side. We have not been able to discover why temperance is called temperance, or of what it consists or should consist. We have made concessions that the logic of our arguments did not allow us to make, and even this did not help us to any result. Yet I am inclined to believe that temperance is a vast good, and that I am a poor searcher after its nature, rather than that temperance is something not to be desired. For temperance does exist, since Charmides, here, has it in good portion. 'Twould be a pity if it were of no use to him, since he has so much of it. So let us regard the trouble as merely that I am a poor inquirer, and a poor reasoner, but that temperance remains a good, even though we cannot name precisely what it is.

LACHES (COURAGE)

Characters: Lysimachus, Melesias, Nicias, Laches; Sons of Lysimachus and Melesias; Socrates.

(The *Laches* is "a vigorous sketch, in which the characters of the soldier, the aged citizen, and the prudent general are well preserved." It is worth noting that in this Dialogue Socrates is conversing with his elders about the proper training of the young, since corruption of the young was one of the charges on which Socrates was later to be brought to trial (Little Blue Book No. 94). The Dialogue centers around the subject of courage (bravery, fortitude). Three men, all of them undeniably brave, become rather helpless in argument and fail to discover just what qualities a man must possess in order to be acknowledged brave.

(The Dialogue opens with a short speech by Lysimachus, and a subsequent discussion between Lysimachus and Nicias concerning the proper training for their sons. Lysimachus does not wish to see his sons left to themselves, but wants them to receive proper ideas concerning the virtues while they are still young. The character of Socrates is extolled as that of a brave and honorable soldier, besides that of a wise and kindly philosopher, by which Lysimachus is much pleased.

(Socrates is asked to express his opinion regarding the training of the young, with particular reference to instruction in the use of arms. He protests that he knows nothing of the mat-

ter, never having had instruction of any sort, but he is willing to carry on an investigation with Laches and Nicias, who know much about it. They are willing to be questioned, though Nicias, of old, knows that he is likely to be severely exposed by the penetrating queries of Socrates. Proceeding to discover, then, what is best suited to inculcate desirable virtues in the young, Socrates explains that, before that matter is discussed, it will be necessary to determine what these virtues are.)

Socrates. Let us not speculate about the whole of virtue—for that might prove too great a task. But let us examine a certain part of it. Which part shall we select? It seems that we ought to take that part to which instruction in arms seems to tend. That is, naturally, fortitude or courage. So we must seek to discover what courage is, before we can consider by what means it is possible to inspire it in young men. Laches, what do you say courage is?

Laches. That is easy. Whoever remains in his place to defend himself from an enemy, and does not flee—he is a brave man.

Soc. But what of the man who fights while fleeing, or moving?

Lac. How mean you?

Soc. Why, such men as fight while running, and are as Homer calls Æneas: "in fight expert." But my real objection, Laches, is that I didn't mean to ask you about one particular form of bravery, but about bravery in all sorts and conditions of war, on land or sea, and even

about the bravery that enables a man to face disease, poverty, and such ignoble things, and to resist the temptations of lust and pleasure. For in all these things men show courage, and I ask you what this courage is.

Lac. I do not quite understand.

Soc. Consider swiftness. What is the essential element that makes swiftness in all things done with speed, be it running, jumping, playing the harp, speaking with the mouth, or what not? It is, of course, that power which accomplishes much in a short time, as regards the movement of the body, or the harp, or the tongue and lips. Now, in like manner, tell me what courage, present in various things, always is. What is the power which is the same in pleasure and pain, and in all the things of which we just spoke, that is called fortitude?

Lac. It appears to be a certain endurance of the soul.

Soc. Apparently you do not consider every kind of endurance to be fortitude. But you regard fortitude as something very beautiful, do you not?

Lac. Assuredly I do.

Soc. What, then, of those endurances that exist in conjunction with prudence, and folly? Is not the former beautiful, the latter hateful and ugly?

Lac. True.

Soc. So prudent endurance, being beautiful, would be fortitude; but foolish endurance, being ugly, would not be fortitude. Let us see. If a man spends his money prudently, know-

ing that it will thus bring him the greatest profit, will he be a brave man?

Lac. I think not.

Soc. Or in war, is the man who fights with the large force and with the least danger, though he endures what little there is to endure, as brave as he who fights on the opposite side with less support and much more danger?

Lac. Hardly, Socrates. He who fights with the most difficulties is the braver.

Soc. Ah, Laches, the endurance of this man is more imprudent than the other's. Isn't it more prudent to be on the safer side?

Lac. Aye, so it seems.

Soc. Consider, too, the man who is well trained in cavalry and the man who is not. You would say, wouldn't you, that the less expert, if he goes into cavalry, is the braver? Similarly, with swimmers in a tank—you would consider the worst swimmer, who nevertheless plunges in and endures the ordeal, to be the bravest of all, wouldn't you?

Lac. Naturally.

Soc. But surely the man who is untrained shows less prudence in his act than he who is trained. We said before that such foolhardy endurance was not beautiful, but evil and harmful. And we said that fortitude was always a beautiful thing. Now we seem to say that foolish endurance is fortitude, though it is hurtful and ugly. Do we speak well?

Lac. I don't think we do.

Soc. However, we mustn't let our words be at variance with our works. If endurance is forti-

tude, let us examine it and endure the searching out of the problem, lest we be less brave in our inquiry than our words imply that we should be.

Lac. It is strange. I have a conception of fortitude, sure enough, but I cannot seem to put it into words. Expression of its eludes me.

Soc. A good huntsman, Laches, keeps running in pursuit and doesn't give up. If you cannot say what courage is, perhaps Nicias can. Now then, Nicias, can you tell your troubled friends what you think fortitude is?

Nicias. You are forgetting some of your own words, Socrates. I have heard you say that we are good according to what we know, and bad according to our ignorance.

Soc. True enough, Nicias.

Nic. Hence, if a brave man is good he is also wise.

Soc. See, Laches. He calls courage a kind of wisdom. But, Nicias, tell us what kind, for it surely is not that belonging to the harp. What is it, or of what is it the science?

Nic. It is the science relating to things of dread and daring, both in war and in all other things.

Lac. That is absurd. Wisdom is surely separate from fortitude.

Nic. It is not. Laches is jealous because I seem to say something to the purpose.

Lac. No more to the purpose than did I. For do not physicians know of things of dread? And do brave men have to know of such? And are physicians brave men?

Nic. Physicians are not necessarily brave, but they know only healthful and unhealthful things. They know not, however, whether to be ill or well is better. For even in death, it is sometimes better to die than to live. To those to whom it is an advantage to die, are the same things dreadful that are dreadful to those to whom it is an advantage to live?

Lac. Surely not.

Nic. Now only the man who knows things of dread and things that are not of dread, can know the difference between advantage and disadvantage in these things.

Lac. It seems you refer to prophets, who do know such things.

Nic. Prophets know only whether a certain one is to die or to live, but not whether it is best for him to do either. At least, they know this no more than any other person knows it.

Lac. He talks in empty words, Socrates, like a man seeking to confute by perplexing his hearers in a court of justice.

Soc. We'll try him and see. Nicias, do you say that courage is the science of things of dread and daring?

Nic. I do.

Soc. But every man does not possess this knowledge, for you say that neither a prophet nor a physician possesses it. But he who does possess it is brave. Is this your belief?

Nic. Yes.

Soc. No animal or wild beast, then, can ever be brave, for no lion or tiger can know what so few men are able to know.

Lac. You speak well, Socrates. Answer this, if you can, Nicias. We call animals brave, and yet they haven't this knowledge of which you speak.

Nic. I do not admit that wild beasts can be brave, for they are ignorant of fear, and have no knowledge of things of dread, just as you say, Laches. They are not courageous, therefore, but *fearless* and stupid. Children who fear nothing, through ignorance, are not brave either. To be *fearless* is not to be *brave.* Few people have fortitude and the forethought that goes with it, but many have a fearless boldness, which is not prudent, as is fortitude, but rash.

Lac. Behold such audacity! Those whom all men acknowledge to be brave, Nicias endeavors to deprive of the honor.

Nic. No, not I. You and others, Laches, are wise if you are brave. That is all I say.

Soc. Let us examine the question more closely. We agreed at the beginning that fortitude was a part of virtue. Doesn't fortitude, with many other parts, make up what we call virtue?

Nic. Yes.

Soc. Are we, then, talking of the same parts? In addition to courage, there are temperance, justice, and many other things that are parts of virtue. Is this not so?

Nic. It is so.

Soc. Let us see whether we are agreed further. Perhaps we do not consider the same things to be of dread and daring. Things that

occasion fear are things of dread, but those that do not occasion fear are things of daring. Evils past or present occasion no fear, but only evils to come occasion fear—for fear is the expectation of future evil. Is this right, Laches?

Lac. I think so.

Soc. Thus, Nicias, we say that future evils are things of dread, but future things that are either good or not evil are things of daring. Do you agree?

Nic. Quite.

Soc. You call the science of these things fortitude?

Nic. Exactly.

Soc. But there can be no separate science for the past of a thing, and the present of a thing, and the future of the same thing. The science of health remains the same whether it refers to health past, present or future. And it is just the same with agriculture, and with war. and with all other things. Hence, Nicias, you must agree that the same science has a knowledge of the same things throughout future and present and past time.

Nic. Why should I not?

Soc. Yet you were just telling us, Nicias, that fortitude is the science of future things only, for we had decided that things of dread and daring were related to the future only. Since the science of anything is the same for all time, fortitude must also, under this reasoning, have knowledge of present and past evils also. If this is so, your answer, Nicias, covers only a third of fortitude, when we asked you,

you know, to name what the whole of fortitude might be.

Nic. No matter. We have the whole answer now.

Soc. Yes, surely. But, see. Anyone who has a knowledge of all such things—past, present, and to come—would be equipped not with one virtue, fortitude, only, but with all the other virtues, such as holiness, temperance, and so on, as well. Thus we have defined not a part of virtue, as we set out to do, but virtue itself, if this is our reasoning. Fortitude, you know, we said was only a part of virtue.

Nic. So it seems.

Soc. Our arguing is thus all for naught. For all our words, Nicias and Laches, and for all your bravery, we have not been able to discover what courage really is.

EUTHYPHRO (PIETY)

Characters: *Euthyphro, Socrates.*

(The *Euthyphro* is grouped here for its discussion of a single ethical topic—piety—although it is customarily grouped with the trial and death Dialogues (*Apology*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*), because it mentions the approaching trial of Socrates for impiety. There was not room enough to include the *Euthyphro* with the *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*, in Little Blue Book No. 94, so it is included here as the next best classification for it. The implication of the Dialogue is that, though Socrates is accused of impiety, he has taught more deeply concerning the true nature of piety than has any one of his accusers.

(Euthyphro meets Socrates and learns from him that he has been accused by one Meletus of corrupting the young, and, by creating new gods—the prophetic sign that Socrates claimed warned him of danger—in place of the recognized deities, he is further accused of acting impiously. Euthyphro does not think the charge will have any serious consequence. Whereupon, Euthyphro, in his turn, explains that he has a prosecution of his own to attend to, and he expects, too, that his case will turn out favorably for himself.)

Socrates. What is this case of yours about? Are you defending or prosecuting?

Euthyphro. Prosecuting.

Soc. Whom?

Euth. Ah, people think me very mad to do it. He is very old. He is my father.

Soc. Your own father, indeed! What do you accuse him of?

Euth. Of murder, Socrates.

Soc. Murder! Well, certainly to be able to do such a thing and to be right in doing it indicate the highest form of wisdom, Euthyphro. Most men could not be sure of themselves. I suppose it is one of your relatives who has been killed, for surely you would not prosecute your own father for a stranger's sake.

Euth. What difference would that make? The question is simply whether the man who killed him killed him lawfully or not. If he killed the man unlawfully, he must be prosecuted, especially if one lives under the same roof and eats at the same table with him, for the contamination spread to others unless they take measures to have justice done.

As a matter of fact, the murdered man was a hired laborer of ours. He got drunk and when quarreling with a servant of the house, he managed to cut the servant's throat. My father, thinking the laborer a murderer, had him bound and flung into a pit, while he—my father—sought to discover what ought to be done about it. Meanwhile the poor fellow in the pit was neglected, and, before anyone arrived to tell my father the right and wrong of the case, he had died of exposure and hunger.

I am being censured for prosecuting my father for killing this man, who was a murderer

himself, and, therefore, people say, ought to have died anyway. Yet these people who censure me do not see things clearly. They obscure the divine law of holiness, of piety.

Soc. You understand this law, though. So much so, indeed, that you are quite confident that you are perfectly right in thus prosecuting your own father, that you are not by any chance doing something unholy.

Euth. I am sure I am right.

Soc. Splendid! Instruct me in this, Euthyphro, so that when I am brought to trial I can assert that I know the true nature of piety, and thus escape this charge of impiety that Meletus is bringing against me.

Euth. Very gladly, Socrates.

Soc. Is not holiness, or piety, always the same thing in every case, no matter whether it has to do with murder, or something else? And unholiness, too?

Euth. Most assuredly.

Soc. What, then, is holiness, and what unholiness?

Euth. Why, holiness is to do what I am doing—to prosecute a wrong-doer, be he father or mother or anyone, and not to so prosecute is unholy. Compare the gods, Socrates. Zeus, the father and king of all, put his father in chains for the crime of swallowing his sons; and, before that, Cronus, in his turn, punished his father for such a crime. Yet people are angry with me for seeking to punish my father for a crime.

Soc. The trouble with me, perhaps, is that I

cannot credit these tales about the gods. I may be convicted of impiety on this account. But I am ignorant and you are wise, Euthyphro, so I may have to agree with you. Do you really believe these things happened?

Euth. Surely I do.

Soc. And all the terrible strifes of the gods, and the many strange things they do and have done, as are depicted in the art of our temples —do you believe all these things too?

Euth. Of course, and many others that would surprise you.

Soc. But let us go on with piety. I asked you to tell me what piety is, the thing that is always the same everywhere, and you gave me only one example of it. Now tell me what essential characteristic makes all things holy that are holy, so that I may use it for a pattern, to tell whether a given thing is truly pious or impious.

Euth. Well, then, I say that what the gods love is holy and pious, and that what they do not love is unholy and impious.

Soc. That is the sort of answer I mean. Let us examine it. Holiness, you will grant, is the exact contrary of unholiness, and you say that whatever the gods love is holy, and whatever they do not love is quite the opposite, or unholy?

Euth. Exactly.

Soc. We said that the gods were engaged in strifes, and disagreed with one another.

Euth. We did say so, and it is quite true.

Soc. What kind of disagreements do you

suppose can cause enmity and anger? If you and I, Euthyphro, differed as to the number of something, we could count it and settle our dispute. Or we could settle sizes by measuring, weights by weighing, and so on, so that these disagreements would not cause enmity or anger. But with things concerning which we have no standards, no criteria by which to judge, we may disagree and incur enmity and anger—such things as beauty, ugliness, good, evil, right, wrong, holiness, unholiness. Isn't this so?

Euth. Yes, indeed. Men differ greatly on such matters, and, differing, become often very angry.

Socs. The gods also, Euthyphro. If they differ at all, it must be about such things.

Euth. Surely.

Soc. Therefore the gods differ as to what is beautiful and good and right. Otherwise, as we have said, they would not quarrel, and we know they do quarrel. Am I right?

Euth. Quite right.

Soc. Whatever a god believes to be beautiful and good and right, he will love, and he will detest and hate its opposite, will he not?

Euth. Of course.

Soc. But we agreed that the gods disagreed over these same things, so that one god would love, perhaps, what another would hate. So the same things are both loved and hated by the gods.

Euth. So it appears.

Soc. Or, according to our reasoning, the

same things would be both holy and unholy, which is impossible, for we said that piety and impiety are direct contraries of each other. Thus, what you are doing to your father might be approved and loved by Zeus, but hated by Cronus, whom Zeus punished. Don't you see that you haven't answered my question as to what piety is?

Euth. I hardly think the gods would differ about the fate of a man who has killed another unjustly.

Soc. Just so. Neither do men differ about the proper punishment for a wrong-doer, once he has been shown to be a wrong-doer. But what constitutes killing another unjustly? Do men agree on what is wrong, and therefore on what makes a man a wrong-doer? And how often do the gods agree on what is right and what is wrong?

Euth. I do not know.

Soc. Well, then, Euthyphro, it seems to me that the gods might differ as to whether you are doing right in prosecuting your father. But perhaps you can convince me that all the gods will agree on your piety in this matter, and if you can so convince me I shall never cease to praise you and your great wisdom.

Euth. Of course, it will be difficult, but I am sure I can show you I am right.

Soc. I am less easy to convince than the jury, then. Is that it? For surely you anticipate no difficulty in showing the jury that your father has done wrong and that you are doing right.

Euth. Of course, I expect to show them I am right.

Soc. Never mind that now, Euthyphro. We are not considering this particular matter, but the general matter of piety. Suppose we concede that whatever *all* the gods love is holy, and whatever *all* the gods hate is unholy. Then whatever some love and others hate, or whatever is both loved and hated by the gods, will be neither holy nor unholy, or else both together. Shall we accept this definition?

Euth. Why not?

Soc. Then let us test its truth. For we ought not to accept any statement without testing it, had we?

Euth. It is fair to test it, of course, but I do think this statement is sound.

Soc. Very well. Is piety loved by all the gods because it is holy, or is it holy because it is loved?

Euth. I don't understand.

Soc. It is like this. We speak of what is carried and of what carries it, of what is driven and what drives it, of what is seen and what sees it. All these differ one from another—that is, what is carried is not the same as what carries it, what is driven is not the same as what drives it, what is seen is not the same as what sees it—and you understand, Euthyphro, that they differ and why they differ?

Euth. I understand this.

Soc. Similarly, there is also that which is loved, and, distinct from it, what loves it.

Euth. Agreed.

Soc. Is a carried thing a carried thing because it is carried, or for some other reason?

Euth. It is a carried thing because it is carried.

Soc. And a driven thing is such because it is driven, and a seen thing is a seen thing because it is seen, and only for these reasons?

Euth. Yes.

Soc. A seen thing is not seen, of course, because it is a seen thing, but it is, on the contrary, a seen thing because it is seen. And so with the others. Thus, whenever an object becomes anything, it does not become something because it is a thing that is in process of becoming, but it is a thing in process of becoming because it is a touched thing—that is, it is a touched thing because it is touched.

Euth. I agree to this.

Soc. And with beloved things it is certainly the same. A thing is not loved because it is a beloved thing, but it is a beloved thing because it is loved.

Euth. Granted.

Soc. Now we said piety was that which is loved by all the gods. Is it loved simply because it is holy, or for some other reason?

Euth. Simply because it is holy.

Soc. Then it is loved because it is holy, and not holy because it is loved.

Euth. I think so.

Soc. Because it is loved by the gods, however, it is a thing beloved by them and dear to them, so that what is dear to the gods is not the same as holiness, as you assert, for we

agreed that holiness is loved because it is holy, and that it is not holy because it is loved. And further, that what is dear to the gods is so because they love it, and only because they love it, and that they do not love it because it is dear to them.

Euth. You are quite right.

Soc. Thus, if we agree that holiness (piety) and what is dear to the gods mean exactly the same thing, then, since we said that holiness is loved because it is holy; what is dear to the gods (holiness) would be loved because it is dear (holy), and holiness (what is dear to the gods) would be holy (dear) because it is loved. But the contrary is true. One is lovable because it is loved, the other is loved because it is lovable, which shows that they are quite distinct. So, Euthyphro, you have not told me what holiness is, but only something that happens to it. Tell me, therefore, what holiness is. I care not what happens to it; for the moment, I care not whether it is loved by the gods or not.

Euth. I confess I am at a loss. Whatever we say seems to be resolved into nothing.

Soc. Ah, they refuse to stay where they are put, these theories of yours. If they were my theories, you could compare me with my ancestor, Dædalus, the sculptor whose statues were so lifelike that they were said to move—my ancestors, Euthyphro, for, as you know, I am the son of a sculptor. But I cannot bring this jest to bear with you, for the theories are yours, not mine.

Euth. You are responsible, though, for their moving. Had it rested with me, they would have stayed quiet enough.

Soc. So much the better artist am I than Dædalus, who could make only his own works move, while I make the works of others take on motion. Too, it has been against my will, for I want more than anything else to have this matter of holiness placed on a firm foundation. So much so that I am willing to suggest new theories, since you are unwilling. Now, then, is holiness righteous?

Euth. Indeed it is.

Soc. All holiness is righteous, but is all righteousness holy, or only a part of it holy, and a part something else?

Euth. I do not follow you.

Soc. Come, Euthyphro, gird up your mental loins! This isn't hard to see. Consider the poet's lines: "Where there is fear and trembling, follow reverence and shame." I assert that this isn't true, for a great many things are feared in which there is no element of shame. Thus a man may fear illness, and not be ashamed of fearing it. But wherever there is shame, there is always fear.

Euth. I see that.

Soc. Hence, fear is a broader term than shame, for it includes shame, which is a species or variety of fear. Just as odd number is a variety of number—wherever there is number, it is not always odd, but wherever there is odd number there is always number. Do you follow this?

Euth. Easily.

Soc. Now it seems that wherever there is holiness there is always righteousness, but holiness is only a variety of righteousness, so that wherever there is righteousness there is not always holiness.

Euth. Very well. Go on.

Soc. What kind of righteousness is this holiness or piety? You are to tell me that, for I cannot tell it for myself.

Euth. That part of righteousness which has to do with the care of the gods is holiness. The rest has to do with the care of men.

Soc. An admirable answer! But what kind of care do you mean? It doesn't seem to be the same sort of care the groom gives to horses, for that care makes the horses better; or that the herdsman gives to cattle, for that makes the cattle better. Such care is never for the object's disadvantage, but always for the benefit of the object of care. But is holiness such care as to make the gods or any one of them any better?

Euth. Certainly not!

Soc. Then what kind of care do you mean, Euthyphro?

Euth. The kind, assuredly, that slaves give their masters. A species of service, perhaps.

Soc. What is the aim or purpose of this service? A doctor's servant aims at health, you would say. A shipwright's servant at the construction of a ship. A builder's servant at the building of a house, perhaps. Now what does this service of the gods aim at, what work does it seek to accomplish? What is the sum of the

works the gods accomplish for which they need this service of man?

Euth. I admit it is harder to learn the absolute truth about these things than one might at first think. I can tell you this, though: a man who says and does what is grateful to the gods in prayer and sacrifice, does what is pious and holy, and this it is that preserves the family and the state, and anything varying from this overthrows and destroys all we have.

Soc. Ah, Euthyphro, when we were right at the point of our argument, you turned aside. I have lost that for which I seek. But the inquirer must ever follow the answerer, so I'll now follow you. You say piety is a knowledge of how to sacrifice and to pray?

Euth. Precisely.

Soc. To pray is to ask the gods for something, and to sacrifice is to offer the gods something.

Euth. True.

Soc. So piety is the science of requests and offerings, of and to the gods?

Euth. You understand me perfectly.

Soc. This service to the gods is a service of requests and offerings, then? In the matter of requests, to ask what is right would be to ask for what we need?

Euth. Certainly. Else would be absurd.

Soc. Similarly, in the matter of offerings, to give what is right would be to give what is needed. It would hardly be proper to offer what is not wanted, would it?

Euth. No. What is needed should be offered, of course.

Soc. Holiness thus appears to be a kind of bargaining between gods and man, each seeking something he needs from the other.

Euth. If you like to call it so, yes.

Soc. I like it only if it is true. Show me how the gods benefit from the gifts we give them. All about us is evidence of their goodness to us, but how do our gifts benefit them?

Euth. Do you really think the gods benefit by our gifts?

Soc. Why shouldn't they? Otherwise, why do we give them?

Euth. Why, we can give them our reverence, and honor them, and be grateful to them.

Soc. So piety is something grateful to the gods, but of no use to them, and not pleasing to them?

Euth. But I think it is pleasing to them.

Soc. And we are back where we were before —that holiness is what is pleasing to the gods.

Euth. Decidedly.

Soc. For what is pleasing to the gods must be dear to them, and we had just finished saying that what is dear to the gods and holiness could not be one and the same thing. So you are Dædalus, not I. You make your own works move without my help, Euthyphro. And now, if we are to know what piety really is, we must begin again to examine the question. For I am determined to know, and since you know if any man knows, I am going to keep hold of you until you tell me.

Euth. Some other time, Socrates. I am in a hurry now, and must be off.

Soc. No, no, my friend! I am desolate at being thus deserted. I do want to know what piety is. If you had only waited to tell me, I might have been able to refute Meletus, and no longer have had to live in ignorance, and could have lived a better life from now on.

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